

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 R

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P R 041749Z MAR 77
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY MONROVIA
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY ATHENS
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T STATE 048415

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ET, SREF

SUBJECT:DEFECTION OF ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS

REF: (A) ADDIS 1257 (NOTAL)

1. PARADE OF ETHIOPIAN DIPLOMATIC OFFICIALS DISILLUSIONED
WITH PMAC NOW APPARENTLY INCLUDES FONMIN KIFLE AND
POSSIBLY SEVEN FORMER ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS. WE EXPECT
MORE TO TURN UP AS ETHIOPIAN CHIEFS OF MISSION WEIGH

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WISDOM OF RETURNING TO ADDIS ABABA PER PMAC DIRECTIVE.
DEPT. CONTINUES TO SHARE EMBASSY'S CONCERN THAT PMAC NOT
RPT NOT OBTAIN IMPRESSION THAT USG SOMEHOW PLOTTING AGAINST
IT BECAUSE ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS WHO HAVE BROKEN WITH REGIME
MAY APPEAR HERE.

2. AT PRESENT WE AWARE OF THREE FORMER ETHIOPIAN AMBASSA-

DORS NOW IN U.S.; ATO MILLION FROM TOKYO WHO MAY BE SEEKING ASYLUM SHORTLY; AMB. BEKELE ENDESHAW FROM BONN, NOW AT AFRICAN STUDIES CENTER, BOSTON UNIVERSITY ON GRANT; AND AMB. GETACHEW MEKASHA FROM CAIRO (CAIRO 3544) WHO SCHEDULED ARRIVE LOS ANGELES MARCH 3 WITH FAMILY (PARIS 6274) AND INDICATED HE WOULD RESIDE IN PASADENA. AS YOU AWARE FROM LAGOS 2234, AMB. YOFTAHE DIMETROS PLANNING RESIGN HIS POST AND PROCEED INITIALLY TO ISRAEL. ADDIS 1257 MENTIONS THREE OTHER POSSIBLE DEFECTORS. WE HAVE LEARNED HERE THAT

AMB. IN ATHENS HAS BEEN OFFERED VISITING LECTURESHIP AT US-RUN PIERCE COLLEGE IN GREECE.

3. AS REQUESTED, CIRCULAR TELEGRAM BEING SENT ALL POSTS CONTAINING GUIDANCE, PARTICULARLY PROCEDURES OUTLINED DEPT.'S A-5895 OF SEPT. 10, 1975 ON HOW TO HANDLE ETHIOPIANS SEEKING ASYLUM OR WHO OTHERWISE INDICATE INTENT TO COME TO U.S.

4. PROVISIONAL PRESS GUIDANCE FOR USE IN WASHINGTON IS AS FOLLOWS.

Q. IS THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT CALLING BACK ITS AMBASSADORS FOR A CHECK ON THEIR LOYALTY TO THE NEW HEAD OF STATE, LT. COL. MENGISTU?

A. WE UNDERSTAND THAT ETHIOPIAN CHIEFS OF MISSION HAVE BEEN CALLED HOME TO ADDIS ABABA, INCLUDING THE CHARGE HERE IN WASHINGTON. ONLY THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT CAN SECRET

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PROPERLY ANSWER THE QUESTION AS TO THE PURPOSE OF THEIR RETURN.

Q. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT REPORTS THAT ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADORS TO EGYPT, GERMANY AND JAPAN RESIGNED THEIR POSTS AND HAVE SOUGHT POLITICAL ASYLUM IN THE UNITED STATES?

A. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE INDIVIDUALS YOU MENTIONED ARE IN THE U.S. BUT HAVE NO INFORMATION THAT THEY HAVE REQUESTED U.S. ASYLUM.

Q. WILL THEY BE GRANTED ASYLUM IF THEY ASK FOR IT?

A. A DECISION TO GRANT ASYLUM PURSUANT TO OUR OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE PROTOCOL RELATING TO THE STATUS OF REFUGEES CAN BE MADE ONLY AFTER AN APPLICATION IS MADE AND REVIEWED. SUCH DECISIONS WOULD BE MADE BY THE IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION SERVICE IN CONSULTATION WITH

THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, IF APPROPRIATE.

Q. WHY ARE THESE FORMER HIGH OFFICIALS COMING TO THE UNITED STATES?

A. THE LONG ETHIOPIAN-US FRIENDSHIP HAS PRODUCED MANY PERSONAL, ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL TIES AND MAKES IT NATURAL THAT THEY SEEK TO RESIDE HERE.

Q. HOW WILL THIS AFFECT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE LEFTIST ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT?

A. WE SEE NO REASON WHY THE POSSIBLE PRIVATE DECISIONS OF INDIVIDUALS SHOULD AFFECT OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT. WE ARE NOT ENCOURAGING SUCH INDIVIDUALS TO COME TO THE U.S. BUT WE CANNOT JUSTIFIABLY BAR THOSE WHO ARE QUALIFIED FOR ENTRY HERE.

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Q. DO YOU EXPECT THAT THESE AND OTHER FORMER ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS WILL BE WORKING TO DEPOSE THE ETHIOPIAN MILITARY GOVERNMENT?

A. WE HAVE NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER TO PERMIT OUR COUNTRY TO BECOME A BASE OF OPERATIONS FOR ANTI-EPMG ACTIVITIES.

Q. DO YOU KNOW THE WHEREABOUTS OR INTENTIONS OF ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE?

A. FOREIGN MINISTER KIFLE IS NOT IN THE UNITED STATES. ANY COMMENT ON HIM SHOULD COME FROM THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT.

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